

Ex 35-1 to 38-20 Torah Reading - Parshat Va-Yachel
English version to be sung to the Torah tropes by Len Fellman
Latest version March 10, 2021

35:1 Now assembled Moses [the whole congregation] of *B'nei Yisrael* and said, "These are the things commanded by YHWH, for you to do them.
2 For [six days] you may do your work, but on day the seventh [there will be] for you [a holy time]:
a sabbath of complete rest to YHWH. Whoever [does on it] any work shall be put to death.
3 Do not kindle a fire in all your habitations on the day of the Sabbath."
4 Then spoke Moses to the whole community *B'nei Yisrael* saying, "This is the word that was commanded by YHWH, as follows:"
5 Take from among you contributions for YHWH. [All those] moved in their hearts, [let them bring it]—their donation to YHWH,
gold and silver and copper,
6 [wool of blue-violet] [and purple thread], and wool made of crimson, fine linen, and goat's hair,
7 be [sides skins from rams] [that are dyed red], skins *that* are dyed ocher*, and wood of acacia, *According to
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8 oil for the lamp, and spices for oil of anointing, and incense that is sweet,
9 [stones of onyx] and other [stones for setting], for the ephod and for the breastplate.
10 All who are wise of heart, [among you] is to come and to make [all of the things] that have been commanded by YHWH.
11 [First, God's dwelling place], its tent and its covering, its clasps and its beams [and its crossbars], its posts and its sockets,
12 The ark and its poles, [and the ark cover], and the tapestry that screens it,
13 the table with its carrying poles, [and all its utensils], and the bread of the presence.
14 [And the lampstand] [for giving light], with its implements and its lamps, and the oil for lighting,
15 the altar of incense [with its carrying poles], and the oil of anointing, and the incense aromatic,
and the entrance screen, at the entrance of the tabernacle.
16 [They will also make] | the altar [of burnt offering], the grating made of copper [that goes with it], its poles, [and all its equipment],
the washstand and its base,
17 And the hangings for the courtyard, its columns and its bases, [and along with these], the screen for the gate of the courtyard,
18 [the stakes or the pins] [that are used for the *mishkan*], the stakes for the courtyard, and their ropes,

35:19 the garments finely woven, for serving in the sanctuary:

the clothing—[sacral vestments] for Aaron the priest, and the clothing of his sons, [to serve as priests].

20 [Then they went out]—[end aliyah] the whole assembly *B'nei Yisrael*, from the presence of Moses.

21 [And they came]—[every person] who was stirred by his heart. [Yes, indeed they all came]—[those of whom] a willing spirit [moved them].

[They proceeded to bring] a donation to YHWH for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its construction, and for the sacred vestments.

22 There came the men, [along with the women], [all of whom] [had in them] [willing hearts]. [These brought with them] bracelets and earrings, finger-rings and ornaments, all made of gold; [these from everyone] who desired [to raise up] an offering of gold to YHWH.

23 [And every man] with whom [was found on him] [wool that is turquoise], [purple or blue], or crimson wool, fine linen or goats' hair, skins of rams [that were dyed red], and skins of tanned leather—they brought them.

24 [All those who raised] offerings of silver or copper—[these they brought with them], as a portion for YHWH.

[Also anyone] [with whom] there was found with him some [wood of acacia] for the work of construction—they brought it.

25 Every woman of skill, with her own hands did spin,

and she brought [what she had spun]—whether blue or purple or crimson wool, [as well as fine linen].

26 [And all of the women] of whom [they were moved] [within their hearts], [they being inspired] with skill—they spun the goat hair.

27 [The tribal leaders] [brought these things]: stones of lapis lazuli [and other stones] for setting, for the ephod and for the breastplate.

28 [They brought the spices] and the oil: [used for lighting], for oil of anointing, and for the incense [that was sweetly scented].

29 Every man or woman who [was willing], [because their heart] [so moved them], to bring [for all of the work]—

[that had been commanded] [by YHWH] to perform through Moses—[they did in fact bring], [*B'nei Yisrael*] [end aliyah]—a free offering to YHWH.

30 [Then there spoke] Moses to *B'nei Yisrael*, “[See who was picked out]—who was called by YHWH, by name:

Betzalel son of Uri, son of Chur, of the tribe of Judah.

31 I have filled him with a spirit that is godly, [in skillful means], in understanding and knowledge, [in all types of craft],

32 to devise [artistic designs] [as well as to work] in gold, in silver, and in copper,

33 and [in the cutting of stones] for setting, [and in the carving] of wood, makers of all workmanship.

34 [The gift of teaching] God has put in his heart; [both to him] and to Oholiav son of Achisamak, [of the tribe of Dan].

35:35 God has filled them [with wisdom of heart] [to do all kinds of work]: the work of the cutter [and of the designer, [and of the embroiderer]] in sky-blue [and purple wool] [and wool that is dyed] [crimson or scarlet], [as well as fine linen], [and the work of weavers].

They can do all kinds of work, and create skillful designs.

36:1 [They shall thus do the work]—Bezalel and Oholiab—[as well as every] man [who is wise of heart]— [those persons] who had by YHWH wisdom and discernment [instilled in them], [so they would know] [how to do]

all the tasks for the labor of the sanctuary: all that has been commanded by YHWH.

2 Then [called Moses] for Bezalel and for Oholiab and to every man *chocham-lev* (wise of heart) to whom [there had been given] [by YHWH] wisdom in his heart, all who were prompted by their heart to draw near to the work, to do it.

3 [And they took] in the presence of Moses all of the contributions that had been brought by the children of Israel [for the work] of the holy sanctuary, in order to build it. [But the people] [kept on bringing] [more and more] of their offerings, morning after morning.

4 Then came all [of the wise ones], [those very ones] who were working on the sanctuary, one after another, from their work, in which they were engaged.

5 They spoke to Moses, saying: “More gifts are the people bringing than are needed for the service [of the holy work]—as was commanded by YHWH to perform it.”

6 So commanded Moses [that there go out] a call [throughout the camp], proclaiming: “No man or woman [may prepare any more] materials as contributions for the sanctuary.” Thus were stopped the people from bringing more.

7 [The material indeed] [was sufficient] [for the craftsmen] [for all of the work] needed to build it. [end aliyah] [And there was some left over].

8 Made by those wise of heart—[among those engaged] [in doing the work]—was the tabernacle, with [its ten tapestries] made of linen [that is woven], blue-violet and purple, and wool made of crimson, [with a pattern of cherubs], done by designers. Thus did they make it.

9 [Now the length] of the tapestry, [each one of them], was eight and twenty cubits, and the width four cubits for the tapestry, for each one; [the measure the same] [for all the tapestries].

10 [Sewn together] were five of the tapestries, each one to the other. [The other five] tapestries [were also joined], [each one] to the other.

11 [And they made] some loops [of sky-blue wool] [putting them upon] the side of the cloth—[the one that is] [at the end] of one joint.

The same did they do on the side of the cloth—the one at the end of the joint—the second one.

36:12 Fifty [of these loops] [were constructed] on tapestry number one; and another [fifty loops] were made at the end of the tapestry that is at the second joint. [They were opposite]—all of these loops—each one to the next one.

13 [There were also made] fifty clasps made of gold, and joined were the curtains, each one to the next, [with the clasp].

[Thus was the *mishkan*, made one whole.

14 And they made sheets [of goats' hair] as a tent over the tabernacle, eleven such sheets, they made of them.

15 [And the length] of a sheet—[each one of them]—was thirty cubits, and four cubits was the width, for each of the sheets; the measure the same for all eleven sheets.

16 [And they joined] five of the sheets separately, and six other of the sheets separately,

17 [And they made] fifty [loops made of wool] [putting them upon] the edge of the sheet—[the end one]—[at the end of one set], and another [fifty loops] [putting them upon] the edge of the sheet at the end of the second set.

18 [And they did make] clasps made of copper —[fifty of them], so as to bring the tent together, making it one.

19 They made a covering [for the tent] from the skins of rams, dyed red, [and a covering] [end aliyah] of skins made of leather, above it.

20 And they made boards for the tabernacle, out of wood of acacia, standing upright.

21 Ten cubits is the length of each board.

A cubit and a half is the measure of the width of each one board.

22 [Two pegs] [(or projecting pieces)] to a board—[for each one]—

[causing to be aligned], each board with its next one. Thus they did to all the boards of the *mishkan*.

23 And they made the boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards [for the south side], facing southward.

24 And forty [bases of silver] [they did construct] under the twenty boards.

[There were two bases] [under a board]—each one—for its two projections,

[and in the same way], [another two bases] under the boards—all the others—for their two projections.

25 [And for the sides] [of the *mishkan*]—the second side, [the one facing] north, [they made twenty] boards.

26 And their forty bases made of silver: two [of these bases] under a board—[under one board],

and two such bases under a board—all the other ones.

36:27 For the rear of the tabernacle, facing west, they made six boards.
 28 [Another two] boards [they did make] for the corners of the *mishkan*, [the ones at the rear].
 29 And [they were coupled] from below. Together they were coupled [at the top] by a ring: one square ring.
 Thus it was [for the two of them]: for the two corners.
 30 There were eight boards and their bases made of silver, making sixteen such bases,
 two [bases each] [there being] two bases under a board—under each one.
 31 They made bars from wood of acacia, [making five] for the boards of a side of the *mishkan*, [for one side],
 32 [And another five] bars for the boards on a side of the *mishkan*—[another side].
 [Another five bars] for the boards of the *mishkan*: [the side at the rear], facing west.
 33 They made the crossbar in the middle [this bar made to go] in the midst of the boards, [from one end] to the other.
 34 [All of these boards] were [plated with gold],
 and their rings were made out of gold, as holders for the bars, and the bars were plated with gold.
 35 They made a curtain [died in blue-violet] [and purple thread], wool made of scarlet and linen [finely woven],
 the work [of a master craftsman]. They wove into it cherubs.
 36 They then placed [the curtain just made] on four posts [of acacia wood], overlaid with gold, with their hooks made of gold,
 and they cast [for them] four [bases of silver].
 37 [They then made] a screen for the entrance to the tent [died in blue-violet] [and purple thread],
 wool made of scarlet and linen [finely woven]. It was crafted by a weaver.
 38 [They made] [its five posts] and their hooks. [They then overlaid] [the tops of the posts] and their bands with gold.
 But the bases—all five—were of copper.

37:1 [And he made]—Betzalel—an ark out of wood of acacia.
 Two cubits and a half [it was in its length], a cubit and a half in width, and a cubit and a half in height.
 2 [And he overlaid it] with gold that was pure, inside and outside. [He proceeded to fashion] [for the ark] a border of gold [all around it].
 3 [And he cast] [for the ark] four rings made of gold, onto its four feet,
 placing [two of the rings] on the wall [on one side], and two [of the rings] on the wall [on the second side].
 4 And he made poles out of wood of acacia, and overlaid them with gold.
 5 He brought the poles [through the rings] on the sides of the ark, the poles used to carry the ark.
 6 He then made an ark cover out of pure gold, Two cubits and a half in length, and a cubit and a half in width.
 7 [He proceeded to make] two cherubim out of gold. [Hammered out] he [did make them], [from the two] ends of the ark cover.
 8 A cherub—the first one—[on one end] [he did make], and a cherub—one on the other end—he made,
 [from the cover itself] he made the cherubs, at the two ends.
 9 And [these cherubs] had spread-out wings [over the ark], shielding with their wings [the ark cover],
 [with their faces] each one towards its brother, [but down towards the cover], did look the faces of the cherubs.
 10 He then made the table from wood of acacia, [two cubits] in length, a cubit in width, and a cubit and a half in height.
 11 And he overlaid it with gold that is pure, [and he] [made for it] a border of gold, all around it.
 12 [He then made] [for it] [a rim or frame] of a handbreadth, all around, [and he then made] [a border of gold] for the rim, all around.
 13 He made [for the table] four rings of gold. He attached the rings to the four corners of its four legs.
 14 Close to the frame were then placed the rings. They were holders for the poles used to carry the table.
 15 [He made] the poles out of wood of acacia, and overlaid them with gold. [They were used to carry], the table.
 16 [And he made] [all of the utensils]—| the ones [that go on the table], its bowls and its ladles,
 and its jars, [and its chalices]*. They offered libations [with them]. [end aliyah] All were made of pure gold.
 17 He made a menorah out of pure gold, [hammered out] he made the menorah, its base, and its shaft,
 [and its goblets], its knobs and its flowers. From one piece it was made.

*acc. to Robert Alter

37:18 And [six branches] did extend [from its sides]. [Of these there were three] branches [of the menorah] [from the side]—[its *one* side], and another three branches of the menorah [from the side]—[its *other* side].

19 Three [cups that have been engraved] [with almond blossoms] [on a branch]—[on the first branch], with a calyx (or knob) and petals, and [another three cups] [engraved with almond blossoms] in a branch—the next one, with a calyx (knob) and petals. [The same] for all six branches that extend from the menorah.

20 [On the menorah itself] was made four cups, [engraved with almond blossoms] with ornamental knobs and petals.

21 [And there was a decorative knob] [at the base] of one pair of branches [coming from the shaft], [another knob] under a pair of branches—[the next pair], [and one more knob] under a pair of branches—[the last pair]. [Thus for the six] branches extending [from the menorah].

22 The knobs and their branches [of one piece with it] [they were]: [one work, hammered out] from pure gold.

23 He then made the lamps, [numbering seven]. Its tongs and its fire-pans were also pure gold.

24 [Out of one talent] (perhaps 100 lb.) of pure gold, he made the menorah, [all of its utensils] included.

25 [And he made] the altar of incense, from wood of Acacia, a cubit [in its length] and a cubit in width, [square in shape], two cubits in height, [and from the same piece] —were made its horns.

26 He then overlaid it with [gold that is pure], [including its roof] [as well as its walls] [all around it], [and also its horns]. [And he also] [make for it] a rim of gold, all around.

27 [And he placed two] rings made of gold [that he made for it] under [the border or rim], on two [of its sides], on opposite sides. They were housings for poles to carry the altar, [with them].

28 He made the carrying poles of wood of acacia, and overlaid them with gold.

29 [And he made] the oil for anointing—[the sacred oil], and the incense, aromatic and pure—[end aliyah] the work of a perfumer.

38:1 [Then he made] the altar for burnt-offering of wood of acacia,
 [it being five] cubits in length, and five cubits in width—thus square; as well as three cubits in height
 2 He made [its protrusions (or horns)] on its four corners. [Of one piece with it] were its protrusions. He then overlaid it with copper.
 3 [He then made] all the implements [for the altar]: the pots and the shovels, and the basins; the forks and the fire-holders.
 [All of these implements] he made out of copper.
 4 He made for the altar a grating—the work done with netting of copper; underneath [the rim of the altar], extending down to the midpoint.
 5 [And then he cast] [a total of four] rings on the four edges of the netting of copper, as holders for the poles.
 6 He made the carrying poles from wood of acacia, and overlaid them with copper.
 7 He brought the poles [through the rings] on the sides of the altar, in order to carry it with them.
 Hollow and of boards, did he make the altar.
 8 [He then did make] this: the basin of copper, and also the pedestal of copper
 from the mirrors [of those women]—the ones who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting.
 9 And he built the courtyard [on the side] that faces [toward the south].
 The hangings of the courtyard were of woven linen, one hundred cubits.
 10 Of their columns there were twenty; of their bases there were twenty, of copper,
 [as well as the hooks] [of the columns], and their bands made of silver.
 11 And for the side facing north, one hundred cubits; their columns twenty; their bases, twenty, of copper.
 [as well as the hooks] [attached to the columns], and their bands made of silver.
 12 [Facing the sea], there were curtains, covering fifty cubits, their columns numbering ten,
 and their bases ten, [as well as the hooks] [attached to the columns] and their bands made of silver.
 13 [Facing eastward] [toward the sunrise] it extended fifty cubits.
 14 [Here there were hangings] of width fifteen cubits, [on one side]; of their poles there were three, of their bases, three.

38:15 [On the other side]—[the second panel]—[on this side] [and that side] for the gate of the courtyard,
[there were curtains] spanning fifteen cubits, their columns numbered three, and their bases three.

16 [All of the curtains] [of the courtyard], all around, were of woven linen.

17 The bases [for the columns] [were made of copper]. The hooks for the columns
and their bands were of silver, and the plating of their tops was of silver.

They themselves were ringed with silver: all the columns in the courtyard

18 [And the screen] for the gate of the courtyard was the work of an embroiderer, [it being made of sky-blue] [and also purple]
and scarlet and woven linen; twenty cubits in length, their height along the width five cubits, [being just like] the curtains of the courtyard.

19 Their columns were four and their bases four, made of copper,
their hooks were of silver. The overlay [for their tops] and their bands were of silver.

20 [All of the stakes] [for the altar] [and for the courtyard] [end aliyah] [all around it] [were made out of copper].

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh or yetiv kadma or pashta gershesh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gershesh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (or: azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
⌞Renew our days⌟	⌞She weeps bitterly⌟	⌞a fire-offering to God⌟

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalsholet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “God” or “Adonai”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)